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Monday
FEBRUARY 10, 2014

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A Chicago Tribune
publication

REDEYE ILLUSTRATION

Kanye West
aka 'Ye

NFL prospect: I'm gay **3**

Tinder's new competition **4**

Locally lovin' Valentine's **18**



Roasted catch of the day at Kinmont

EAT

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The team behind Nellcote and RM Champagne Salon and executive chef Duncan Biddulph—formerly of Lula Cafe and Rootstock—showcase a sustainable fish and seafood menu featuring traditional selections including grilled sturgeon (\$22) and less-utilized “rough fish” in such dishes as a cobia crudo appetizer with Meyer lemon and beauty heart radish (\$12). 5-11 p.m.

DRINK

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Compete with your team for prizes at this weekly single-elimination word nerd tournament. Sharpen your wits with a Quixotry cocktail (\$10). 7:30 p.m. No cover. Rules: oldfifth.com.

REDEYE TIP OF THE DAY

Polls close Monday at 5 p.m. in the first round of RedEye's Best Bartender competition: redeyechicago.com/bartender.

2ND STORY

Webster's Wine Bar

1480 W. Webster Ave. 773-868-0608

Hear tales on the theme of “Any Minute Now: Stories of Loving and Looking” from programming director Bobby Biedrzycki and others. Add a wine flight for \$10 more. 7 p.m. \$20. Tickets: 2ndstory.com.



DO

UNBUSTLED

Untitled

111 W. Kinzie St. 312-880-1511

Local burlesque artists break out their tassels and feathers in the preliminary round of this competition where the audience determines which dancers move on to the semifinals and finals to vie for a \$1,000 cash prize. 7-10 p.m. No cover.

BOXX MAGAZINE PREVIEW PARTY

Jerry's

1938 W. Division St. 773-235-1006

Celebrate the online magazine with founder/music critic Selena Fragassi and executive editor Carly Fisher, who host live performances by Xoe Wise, Architecture and Meagan Hickman at this fundraiser to expand Boxx's offerings. 7-11 p.m. \$10. Tickets: eventbrite.com.



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MISSOURI LINEMAN: I'M GAY

Michael Sam comes out on verge of being drafted by an NFL team

Kansas City Star

University of Missouri senior defensive end Michael Sam on Sunday became the most prominent, and apparently the first, active male athlete on the major U.S. sports scene to publicly disclose that he's gay.

His declaration to two national media outlets Sunday night was a bold contradiction of stereotypes and possibly stakes new ground in what might be termed the civil rights issue of our time.

The 2013 defensive player of the year in the Southeastern Conference was a gay man, and it's sure hard to reconcile that with the enduring and mean-spirited myth of sissification.

Sam made his announcement almost simultaneously to ESPN and The New York Times on Sunday.

"I just want to make sure I could tell my story the way I want to tell it," Sam told the Times. "I just want to own my truth."

Sam's decision to go public makes him potentially a pioneering face and force in the gathering movement for equality at a time when acceptance of gay rights is emerging legally and socially but intolerance still rages.

As a projected third- or fourth-round NFL

pick, Sam figures to be in a visible position going forward.

"We admire Michael Sam's honesty and courage," NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said on Twitter. "Any player with ability and determination can succeed in the NFL. We look forward to welcoming and supporting Michael Sam in 2014."

Just what it might mean for Sam in his budding NFL career is an unknown, as one AFC executive speaking in generalities told The Kansas City Star.

"You've got 32 different entities, 32 different teams," he said. "Everybody drafts players differently. Now, with that being said, we're now in a new era ... of football where stuff like this is becoming part of the fabric of society."

"The bottom line is, can the guy still play? I think history has shown that if you can play and contribute, depending on the locker room, it will be accepted."

Although he's not yet formally in the NFL pool, Sam's proclamation harkens to perhaps the most similar previous case among male athletes in the so-called big four sports (MLB, NBA, NFL and NHL). And it triggers anew broader questions about the pace of routine

acceptance of gays and lesbians.

“I just want to make sure I could tell my story the way I want to tell it. I just want to own my truth.” —Michael Sam

"We need to really shift where it's a non-issue."

While Sam is obviously not the first gay man about to get a chance in the NFL, he's certainly the first whose orientation has been publicly stated beforehand.

That means that no matter what ways he was supported or ostracized in his hometown of Hitchcock, Texas, or at Missouri, there's likely to be a new frontier of resistance in the form of the macho NFL locker room and perhaps in the eyes of fretful executives.

"Our policy is not one of just tolerance but acceptance," NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said at a meeting with sports editors in New York last year.

But as much as that may be true philosophically, there's probably never been a test of that "policy" quite like this.



Molly Fedick

✉ redeye@tribune.com
✉ @mylifeasmolly

Tinder has some new competition

Tired of swiping right to no avail? New dating app Hinge could be the answer to your problems—or the start of more. I put both to the test to see if tried-and-true Tinder held court against the new kid in school—I mean, within your geographical radius.



Tinder

How it works: If you've been living under a rock or have just emerged from a long-term relationship (so, pretty much the same as living under a rock), Tinder is Generation Y's answer to dating: rapid-fire physical judgment followed by bitter disappointment at the person's weird way of holding a fork. Once in a while, Tinder Cupid's arrow strikes and—bam!—you're the app's latest success story.

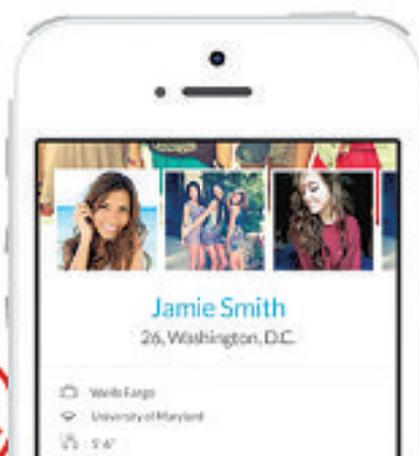
Best feature: Tinder's best attribute is how uncomplicated it is—swipe, swipe, swipe, MATCH! Talk. Meet. Yay! Plus, everyone—and I mean everyone—seems to be on Tinder. Somehow there is zero stigma attached. It's not online dating—it's just swiping!

Worst feature: Tinder's best feature also is its downfall. Its simplicity means every selfie-taking, road-rage-having, brutal-pick-up-line-saying loser has added this app to his arsenal of creepiness. I would not be surprised to see a male gorilla on Tinder. After all, I do live fewer than five miles from the zoo.

Suggested improvements: If Tinder could figure out a way to filter out all selfies, "wacky skydivers" and guys in jewel-toned button-downs with silver ties, this might actually be the perfect app. Unfortunately, I don't see this happening.

THE WINNER: It's a tie! Hinge and Tinder are both fun tools for finding love—Hinge because the people are "vetted" through your social network, Tinder because who doesn't like walking blindfolded into a relationship? Now, who's up for a swipe-fest? **MOLLY FEDICK** IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

V.S.



Hinge

How it works: Instead of presenting a seemingly endless pool of singles, you are given 10 "friends of friends" possible matches each day at "high noon" (yes, that's actually the term). The swiping is the same, but unlike Tinder, you can see more information—religion, interests, height and schools attended.

Best feature: We've all been there—the accidental left swipe. You spot your soulmate and then—[bleep]!!! In a fit of swiping guys posing with tigers to the reject pile, you've just dumped a Zac Efron lookalike in the Tinder trash. Hinge eliminates this horrifying possibility with a feature I've termed the "Oh [Bleep] Shake." A simple shake of the phone and Mr. or Ms. Wonderful is back. Not to mention, the suggested matches are all high-quality, realistic possibilities.

Worst feature: Only 10 matches per day ... which might be a good thing. It forces you to contemplate your reasons for rejection—does James B.'s weird beard really matter that much?

Suggested improvements: Give me more filtering options (why show things like religion and height if you can't filter them?) and I'll be one happy Hinge-er.

SNAPSHOTS FROM SOCHI

The athletes are the stars, but they aren't the only ones worth watching at the Winter Olympics. Tribune photographer Brian Cassella is documenting his experience—the people, the atmosphere, the stray dogs—on Instagram at @briancassella. Here is a sampling of his work. Follow along for the next couple of weeks—you won't be disappointed!



1



2



3



4

PHOTOS

1. Media at work for downhill skiing.
2. Photo lockers bring good cheer.
3. Olympic staffers heart #Sochi
4. Found my #Sochi pet! Hope you enjoy the trip back to Chicago, Oly

—BRIAN CASSELLA PHOTOS



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TUESDAY
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Former Mayor Richard M. Daley was released Saturday from Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

'CRIME OF OPPORTUNITY'

NUMBER OF BIKE THEFTS HOLDS STEADY IN CHICAGO

By Rachel Cromidas | REDEYE

More than 1,100 bikes were stolen in Chicago last year, according to a popular website that collects data on bicycle theft.

The Chicago Stolen Bike Registry compiles and maps reports from local riders about where and how their bikes were stolen, and what locks they were using when the bikes were taken.

The site received close to 1,100 reports in 2012 as well. The Chicago Police Department does not compile specific data on bicycle theft, which is grouped into a broad "theft" category in the city's crime data portal.

Kevin Conway, one of the registry's administrators who tallied up the numbers and posted them on thechainlink.org, a local cycling website, said he looks at the increase of about 5 percent as a sign that Chicago's bike theft problem is stable. He said riders could significantly reduce the number of thefts in the city if they took better care to lock up their bikes properly before leaving them in public or in a garage.

"The consistency of the percentage of thefts that are related to people not locking their bikes or not [at least] locking them with cable locks is really disappointing," he said. "The vast majority of bike theft is crimes of opportunity: I think there's a comparatively small number of professional, career bike thieves out there."



GETTY IMAGES

Conway noted that just 5 percent of reported bike thefts occurred when the bike was locked with a single U-lock hooked through the bike's front wheel, frame and a bike rack—the preferred method for many riders.

He also said the scare over "sucker poles"—sign posts or metal fence rails that are tam-

pered with so that a bike can easily be stolen once attached to them—may be overblown.

"Two percent of our thefts are from people removing a sign pole from its base and stealing a bike that way," Conway said. "But it's certainly captured everyone's imagination."

RCROMIDAS@TRIBUNE.COM | [@RACHELCROMIDAS](https://twitter.com/RACHELCROMIDAS)

SAFER IN THE WINTER?

Bike theft still happens in the winter, Kevin Conway said, though it is less common. "A lot of it is crime of opportunity," Conway said. "and there's not as many bikes out there to choose from in the winter months."

THE DIGIT

2,000

The Irish developer behind the Chicago Spire said it has found an investor to pay its creditors, allowing it to emerge from bankruptcy and possibly restart work on the long-stalled, twisting, 2,000-foot tower.



EXPRESS LINES

» Cook County prosecutors' first-ever terrorism case collapsed Friday when jurors instead found three men who built Molotov cocktails in the days before the 2012 NATO summit guilty of mob action charges and explosives counts that could carry hefty prison sentences.

» Divers safely pulled a 13-year-old girl off the ice of Lake Michigan on Sunday morning. The girl, who has autism and doesn't speak, ended up about 100 feet away from the shoreline just north of Belmont Harbor, Chicago Fire Chief Verdi Allen said.

» A 17-year-old high school student whose family said he was earning money shoveling snow was shot to death on a sidewalk near his home on the Near West Side on Sunday afternoon. **TRIBUNE**

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1 Belgium's Jelena Peeters competes in speedskating in Sochi, Russia, on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS



2 Marcel Meisen falls in the Superprestige cyclo-cross competition in Hoogstraten, Belgium, on Sunday.



3 A Pomeranian competes Friday in the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York.



4 A South Korean Air Force aerobatic team flies in formation Sunday for a preview of Singapore's Airshow.

Justice Dept. to recognize gay married couples' rights

5 **WASHINGTON** Attorney General Eric Holder on Saturday announced widespread changes within the U.S. Justice Department to benefit same-sex married couples, such as recognizing a legal right for them not to testify against each other in civil and criminal cases.

The changes, unveiled by Holder in a speech to a gay rights lobbying group in New York, are designed to continue the push for gay rights in the nation after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year said the federal government cannot refuse to recognize same-sex marriages carried out in states that allow them.

Gay marriage is permitted in only 17 of the 50 U.S. states, as well as the District of Columbia.

U.S. law has long included a "spousal privilege" that protects communications between a husband and wife so that they cannot be forced to incriminate each other in court.

In addition to extending the privilege to same-sex couples in situations involving the Justice Department, Holder told the Human Rights Campaign that he plans to put same-sex couples on the same legal footing as op-

posite-sex couples in other areas, including how certain debts are handled in federal bankruptcy proceedings and visitation policies at federal prisons.

"In every courthouse, in every proceeding, and in every place where a member of the Department of Justice stands on behalf of the United States, they will strive to ensure that same-sex marriages receive the same privileges, protections, and rights as opposite-sex marriages under federal law," Holder said in excerpts of the speech released in advance.

A written memo to department employees will follow Monday. It will "formally instruct all department employees to give lawful same-sex marriages full and equal recognition, to the greatest extent possible under the law," according to the excerpts.

Holder will also make same-sex married couples equally eligible for death benefits paid to the surviving spouses of law enforcement officers who have died on duty and for benefits from the Sept. 11 victims' compensation fund, according to the speech excerpts. The Justice Department runs both programs.

600 Syrians flee besieged city of Homs in aid convoy

6 Six hundred people left the besieged ruins of rebel-held central Homs on Sunday. The evacuees were brought out by the United Nations and Syrian Red Crescent on the third day of an operation during which the aid convoys came under fire and were briefly trapped themselves in the city.

California company recalls 8.7M pounds of beef parts

7 A California company is recalling 8.7 million pounds of beef parts, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said Saturday. The beef was produced between Jan. 1 and Jan. 7 and shipped to distribution centers and stores in California, Florida, Illinois and Texas, the department's Food Safety and Inspection Service said in a statement.

U.K. princes make plea against illegal wildlife trade

8 Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, and his son Prince William have made a video plea urging people around the world to support efforts to stop illegal wildlife trade. The 9-minute video was filmed in November at Charles's London home, Clarence House, and broadcast Sunday.

Global warming slowdown due to Pacific winds: study

Stronger winds which have cooled the surface of the Pacific Ocean could explain what is likely to be a temporary slowdown in the pace of global warming this century, researchers said in a study published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* on Sunday.





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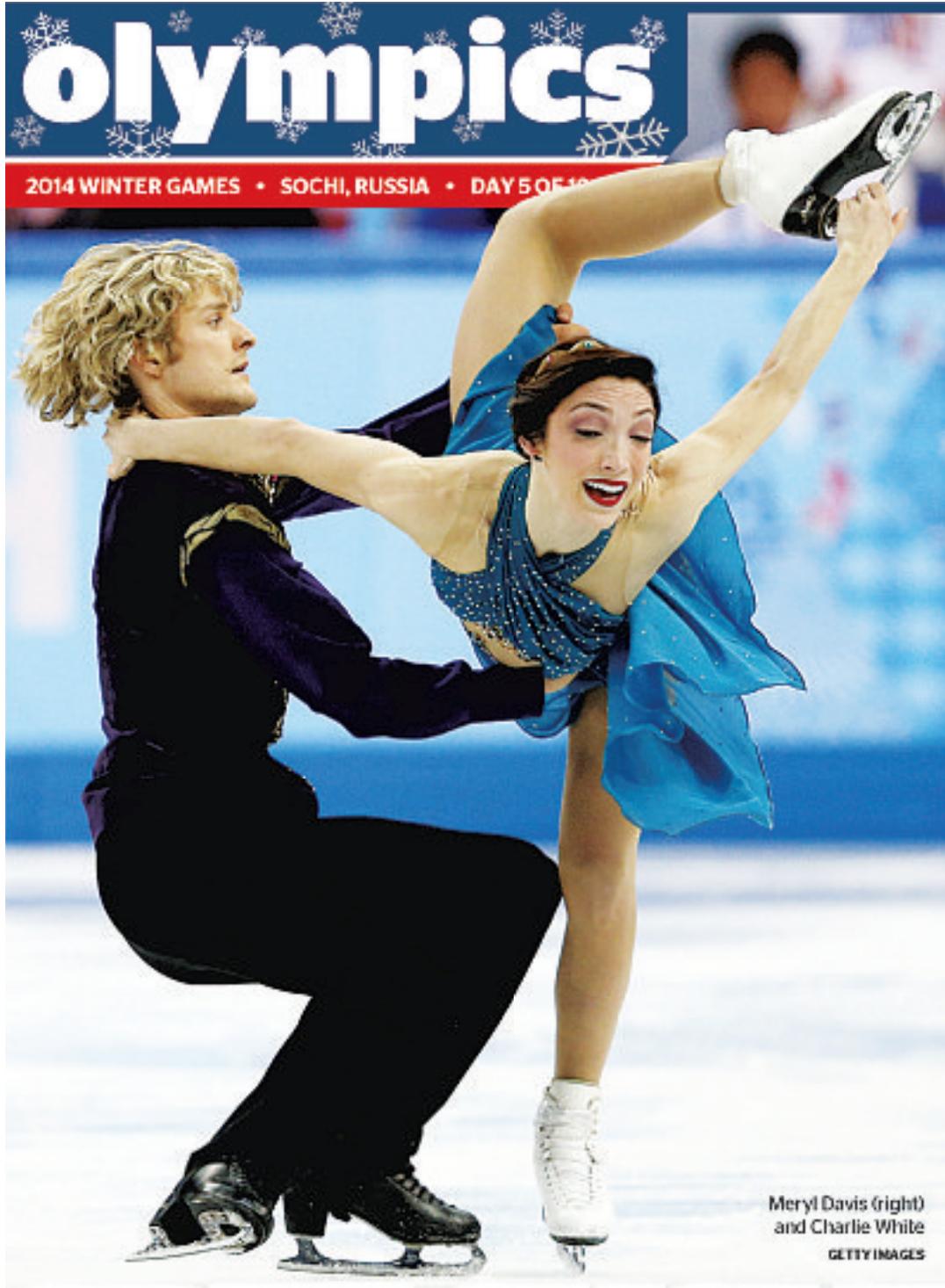


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olympics

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Meryl Davis (right)
and Charlie White
GETTY IMAGES

SPIN CYCLE

What your favorite Olympic skating category says about you

By Dana Moran | REDEYE

Ice skaters! They're just like us! OK, not really. These athletic marvels could skate circles around the Blackhawks—or at least out-lutz them—and they do it with a wink and a smile. With figure skating events on 11 of the 18 days of the Sochi Olympics, there are plenty of ways to get your fix. But everyone has their favorite event on the ice. Here's what yours might say about you. DAMORAN@TRIBUNE.COM | [@REDEYEDANA](#)

You're always the leader of your bar trivia team.



You were one of the kids who got a superlative in the high school yearbook. No, we're not saying which one.

Your favorite part of "The Sound of Music" is when Maria dresses the Von Trapps in the matching curtain outfits.



You enjoy being roughed up in bed.

You know that no situation is complete without a dramatic flip of the hair.

You always suggest group costumes at Halloween.

You have a fear of heights.

PAIRS

Team USA: Nathan Bartholomay and Felicia Zhang; Marissa Castelli and Simon Shnapir

SINGLES

Team USA: Jeremy Abbott, Jason Brown, Polina Edmunds, Gracie Gold, Ashley Wagner



You're an only child.

You have undeniable, creepy chemistry with a sibling who's close in age.

You're so Type A that ballroom dancing just wasn't difficult enough.

MORE ONLINE
Want complete coverage of the Olympic Games? For more photos, video and other Sochi Olympics coverage, visit redeyechicago.com/winterolympics.

ICE DANCING

Team USA: Meryl Davis and Charlie White; Evan Bates and Madison Chock; Alex and Maia Shibutani

Bates **Chock**

A. Shibutani **M. Shibutani**



Firestorm brewing over gay rights?

Chicago Tribune

SOCHI, Russia A controversy has ignited over the selection of three-time Olympic pairs champion Irina Rodnina of Russia to light the Olympic flame.

Rodnina joined compatriot Vladislav Tretiak, the three-time champion hockey goalie, in ending the torch relay by setting ablaze the cauldron that will burn in Olympic Park until Feb. 23.

In September, Rodnina's Twitter account included an obviously doctored photo of President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama looking at a banana in an unidentified hand. It is difficult to see the image as anything but racist.

Was giving Rodnina such a prominent place in the ceremony Russia's retribution to the White House for sending an official Olympic delegation of three openly gay athletes in a country that passed anti-gay legislation last summer?

Asked by NBC's Bob Costas in a Friday interview about the delegation, President Obama replied, "There is no doubt we wanted to make it very clear that we do not abide by discrimination in anything, including discrim-

ination on the basis of sexual orientation."

Dmitry Chernyshenko, chief executive of the Sochi organizing committee, and Konstantin Ernst, the Russian producer of the opening ceremony, denied Rodnina's participation was a statement to the White House.

"I want to stress that the Olympics is not about politics and any political talks and discussions are inappropriate for Olympic Games," Chernyshenko said.

Rodnina, who belongs to Russian President Vladimir Putin's political party and is a member of the Russian parliament, already had deleted the tweet before this most recent firestorm. At the time it was posted, she claimed the picture came from friends in the U.S., where she lived and coached several years after the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union.

When the post first was criticized, Rodnina reacted by saying, "Freedom of speech is freedom of speech, and you should answer for your own hang-ups," according to multiple news accounts.

In a post to her Twitter account early Saturday morning, Rodnina said only that she had received "numerous wishes, greetings and kind words" and offered her thanks.

DEAD ON

Uh oh. Maybe we should have seen a certain apocalypse coming given all the signs in Sochi.



Ernest Wilkins
@ernestwilkins
Chicago's wingman



Elliott Serrano
@elliottserano
Geek specialist



Sarah Spain
@sarahspain
ESPN 1000



Sean Ely
@TheSwanWolf
RedEye
Video editor



Canada Goose
Foul foul
from the Great
White North

1	Why do the U.S. and Canadian women's hockey teams hate each other so much?	The same reason the U.S. and Canadian men don't like each other, I guess? Something to do with syrup and 50 Cent.	Two words: Celine. Dion.	It all started with a maple syrup holdout at the athlete cafeteria.	Canada is jealous of the U.S. ... umm ... well, everything, to be honest. MER-CA!	Sigh. Something about Justin Bieber and Lindsay Lohan. Don't get me started.
2	First a bobsledder breaks down a bathroom door. What's next in Sochi?	Look, I'm just happy nothing has blown up yet. YET.	Bob Costas' infected eye starts a zombie outbreak.	A speedskater freezes to death in an elaborate hedge maze?	A men's figure skater will get trapped in the closet.	Someone uses that bathroom door to win in luge.
3	If you were a freestyle skier, what would be your signature trick?	The double "holy crap is that black guy skiing?"	The Houdini, where I escape from a locked bathroom without breaking the door.	540 Knee Blowout with a Radial Fracture.	Beer-bonging a Natty Light while crossing the finish line.	You're really asking me this? I can fly. It wouldn't even be fair.
4	With the Olympics upon us, the Blackhawks are doing the "Rocky IV" training montage.	... arming themselves for the coming zombie Costas outbreak.	... Kaneling it up at some swim-up bars in the tropics.	... irrelevant. But in my opinion, they always are.	... throwing a rager at Patrick Kane's place.
5	What's the secret to Taj Gibson's improvement on offense?	More playing time? I would be better offensively if I played more, I think.	Do the opposite of everything Carlos Boozer does.	Carlos Boozer's constant encouragement: "Hit that, Taj!" "Get that, T!"	What is this "improvement" you're referring to? Shooting 2-for-5 in 22 minutes against the Suns last week? Mmmk.	He's borrowing Derrick Rose's shooting sleeve.

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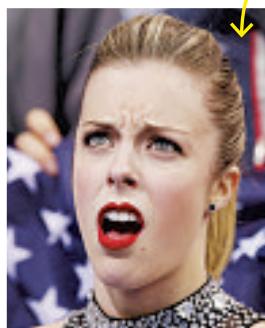
Each day during the Sochi Olympics, we'll share what's giving us chills—good or bad.



Jamie Anderson

Snow stoked

Turns out Americans are really, really good at snowboarding slopestyle. Jamie Anderson's victory in the women's event Sunday sealed an American sweep; Sage Kotsenburg won the men's competition Saturday.



OMG, Ashley!

McKayla Maroney's "Not impressed" vs. Ashley Wagner's "What the ... ?!" You know you were thinking it.

Told ya so

Evan Lysacek called it in RedEye last week, and the Americans delivered with a bronze medal in the inaugural team figure skating event Sunday.

MORE ONLINE

For photos, video and complete Sochi Olympics coverage, visit redeyechicago.com/winterolympics.



Jonathan Toews

BLING RING

Medals being awarded Monday

Alpine skiing: Women's super combined

Biathlon: Men's 12.5 km pursuit

Freestyle skiing: Men's moguls

Short-track speedskating:

Men's 1,500 meters

Speedskating: Men's 500 meters

THE FINISH LINE

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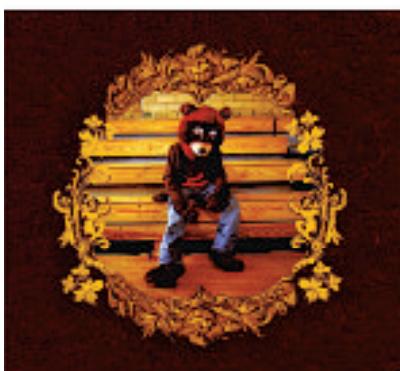
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Back in 2004, fame was just a glimmer in Kanye West's eye

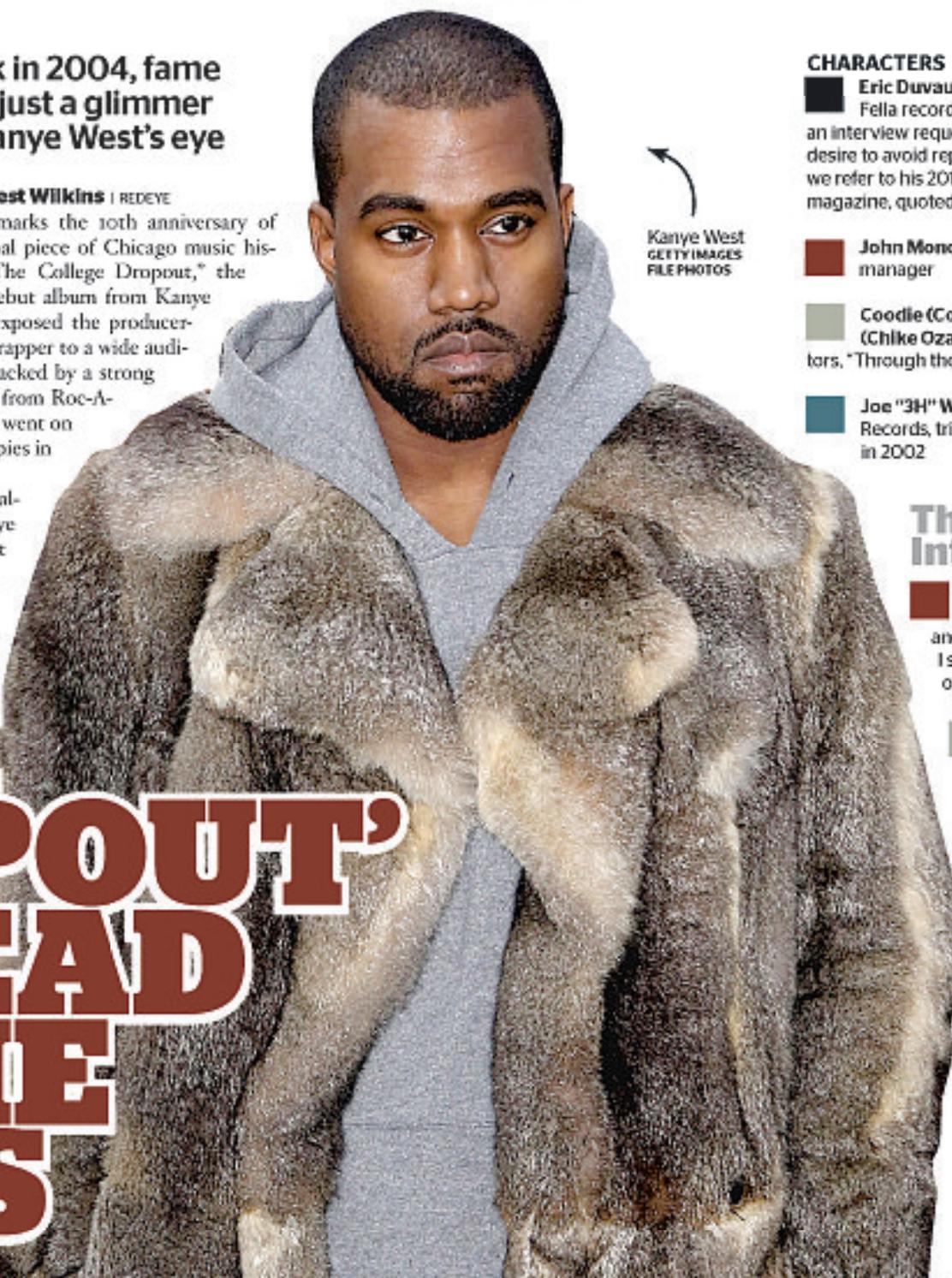
By Ernest Wilkins | REDEYE

Today marks the 10th anniversary of a seminal piece of Chicago music history. "The College Dropout," the 2004 debut album from Kanye West, exposed the producer-turned-rapper to a wide audience. Backed by a strong co-sign from Roc-A-

Fella teammates Jay Z and Damon Dash, the record went on to become a smash, selling more than 3.1 million copies in the U.S. and propelling West to superstardom.

Rather than break down the nuts and bolts of the album (go read Billboard's oral history for that), RedEye rounded up some key characters involved with West at the time to talk about determination, rejection and the pure bona fide hustle it took to get the album made in the first place.

EWILKINS@TRIBUNE.COM | @ERNESTWILKINS



Kanye West
GETTY IMAGES
FILE PHOTOS

FROM 'DROPOUT' TO HEAD OF THE CLASS

All this nostalgia means nothing without a concept of the bigger picture: "The College Dropout" absolutely affected the current generation of young Chicago rappers. RedEye talked to a handful of them to get an idea of what the album means to them. EW.



GG 'The College Dropout' gave an artistic black kid from the South Side of Chicago proof that he could make an indelible mark on the world." —SULAIMAN

CHARACTERS

Eric Duvauchelle: Art designer, Roc-A-Fella records (Duvauchelle turned down an interview request for this piece, citing a desire to avoid repeating himself. He asked that we refer to his 2013 interview with Complex magazine, quoted below.)

John Monopoly: Kanye West's former manager

Coodie (Coodie Simmons) and Chike (Chike Ozah): Art directors/video directors, "Through the Wire"

Joe "3H" Weinberger: A&R at Capitol Records, tried to sign West to the label in 2002

The Introductions

Monopoly: I met Kanye in 1991. I was a producer too, and we connected through that. I started managing him off and on from 1993 through 2008.

Coodie: I met Kanye when he used to come around No I.D.'s studio on 95th Street [in Chicago]. It was him, Common and Dug Infinite. Kanye would come around to see if they would help him make records.

I started noticing Kanye's talent and charisma and I honestly wanted to do a "Hoop Dreams"-type documentary on him.

From then on, I was working on the album. MTV reached out to me to do one of those "You hear it first" things for Kanye. This girl, Yasmine Richards, brought me in and introduced me to Chike.

Eric: I first met Kanye in Damon Dash's office when he handed over a close-to-final edit of the album, and he told me to listen to it to get in the mindset of what he was trying to do. The cover took about three weeks in total to design.

3H: I met Kanye in the beginning of 2001 in New York City. We bought a track and he came to the session and we met that day. He played me "Hey Mama." Blew me away and I immediately wanted to sign him. I called my boss and told him, "We just found the male Lauryn Hill."

Chike: I was working at MTV and we started talking about Kanye as this bubbling artist. I met Coodie and hit it off. A year after that, he hit me talking about this video they were working on and wondering if I could help him out. "Through the Wire" was that video.

The Rejection

3H: So let me paint the picture. I tried to bring in 50 Cent and Kanye West to Capitol in the same month. They said 50 was too aggressive, but they signed Kanye as a favor to me. Even though we signed him, Kanye West was an unproven style of artist at that level. I wasn't in a position where I had power, so there was literally a year and a half of this holding pattern.

"Slow Jamz" and "Jesus Walks" were done a year, almost two years before the album came out. The fact that people heard those and didn't do anything is crazy. It takes a special artist to pull that off. However, fear of the unknown is big. I was informed by the new boss that they weren't moving forward on the project.

Chike: It encouraged [Kanye]. Made him more of a beast and wanted to prove everyone wrong.

The Hustle

Coodie: He would sit next to the graphic designer pointing at the screen like, "Put that there!"

Duvauchelle: Kanye and I spent three days together locked up in the design studio riffing off ideas and visuals.

3H: If he had a studio session, I'd book it from 11 a.m. to the next morning. He would record and produce for the other artists at the beginning of the session, then work the rest of the night [on "The College Dropout"]. That work ethic was contagious.

Monopoly: I remember him drawing promotional posters by hand, and those posters went on to get printed and distributed. He had a team of people around him who wouldn't stop until we got that vision out.

Chike: I would be at work from 10 to 7, then we would go upstairs from 8 to 4 a.m. and work on the video without anybody knowing. We'd sneak over to VH1 and use their computers and editing equipment. I slept in the office at least twice.

3H: There were times where you would sit there with him for four hours and he wouldn't say anything to you the whole time.

Coodie: Kanye would jump on the desk and perform. The music got us through. We didn't care about sleep.

The Fun Stories

Coodie: I would film him all the time, before that was a normal thing for rappers to do.

Monopoly: There was a point when we were working on "All Falls Down" where Kanye and I actually flew to Miami to try and find Lauryn Hill to get the sample cleared. We're literally driving around, calling random people like, "Do you know Lauryn? Can you find her?" [Laughs] It was like The Hunt For Lauryn Hill.

The Video

Me: If there was ever an inclination that Kanye wasn't going to be a garden-variety rapper, his video for "Through the Wire"



Coodie and Chike

was it. The documentary-style clip made a strong impact upon its release. The song itself was recorded after West's 2002 car accident that left his jaw wired shut.

Coodie: So Kanye gets in the accident, and then a week later he calls me. I'm like, "Are you OK?" [Impersonates Kanye with his jaw wired shut]: "Yeh, bud I gawt dis sawng thol!" Then started rapping through his wired jaw! [Laughs] He flew me out to L.A., and now we're filming and DeRay [Davis] would come get us to take Ye to the dentist because we didn't have a car. That's in the video. Kanye was working with Ludacris and Pharrell and he played "Through the Wire" for them and you can see their reactions in the video, too. He was playing "Jesus Walks" for people and they wouldn't sign him for anything. Truthfully, I

think they couldn't understand him; they needed to see his story. The video helped with that.

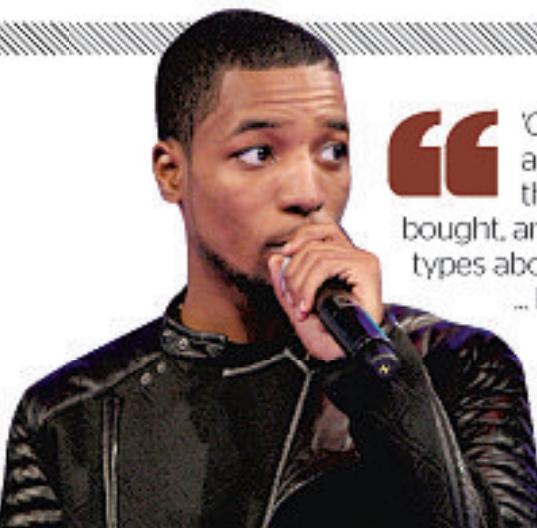
The Results

3H: I always believed that he was a wonderful artist, but didn't know he would get this big. I didn't think we had enough smart people in the world to make Kanye a superstar. It's a classic album of any genre.

Monopoly: A lot of modern rappers are moving in the space that Kanye basically created. They'll tell you that.

Coodie: The album is a classic.

Chike: Yes, and not just in rap. No one can deny that.



“ 'College Dropout' is definitely a special album to me. It's the first rap album I ever bought, and broke a lot of stereotypes about African-American men. ... I listened to that album front to back probably more than any other album, and every time I go back and listen, it still resonates with me on so many levels." —ROOKIE FRESH

“ Kanye was to me what Keef is to the youngins now in the Chi. ... It was exciting to watch a dude from the crib pick up the flag for the Roc! A label that was every young rapper's dream at the time. And to watch the success, the lines of people coming out to purchase it and the shows—fans of so many races. Motivation! Even though I ain't drop out, I did one better—I never went." —BLANCO CAINE

Continue reading on page 17



“ ‘The College Dropout’ let me know it was OK for me to be who I am as an artist, and it was OK to be a creative mind or ‘backpacker’ or whatever versus being a street artist. I always grew up around family that was in the streets, but I knew early it wasn’t the life for me. —ST. MILLIE

“ ‘The College Dropout’ made me drop the expectation of having to go to college.” —TAYLOR BENNETT

“ ‘College Dropout’ changed my life and is one of the few albums that I distinctly remember hearing for the first time. I got an advance copy when I was a senior in college, and just started writing for a hip-hop website. It was cold as hell and snowing at Indiana University. I got the album at the union, put it in my Discman and walked home listening to it. I got chills from the opening sound till the end, and I kept thinking, ‘Wow, this guy did it.’ So much of what Kanye was saying was relatable in ways that was missing from hip-hop at that time. And being from the South Side of Chicago, it was like he was our champion. I had a little piece of Hyde Park or whatever with me amongst the Hoosiers. I was never homesick or anything after that came out. And it’s still my favorite Kanye album for the way it feels, the imperfections, the soulful and warmth.” —ALEX “DJ RIC” FRUCHTER, CO-OWNER OF CLOSED SESSIONS RECORD LABEL



“ ‘College Dropout’ is the most important rap album of this generation. It shifted the tone of rap music, and music in general. It was a whole new style of production; he created a new genre of pop art. They were pop songs, but he was rapping really well. Everyone liked them, too. Like, if you were a rap head, you couldn’t front on them at all. If you didn’t really like rap, it was so catchy and different, yet had an amazing groove to it, you had to dig it. The sounds he used, and the choral elements, the breakdowns, where the drums go, and all the long dancing bass lines. It’s stuff that had never been in rap music, and I can’t think of any other genres it has been in either. He basically created his own genre of music. I’m trying to make my own genre, or rather genre-less music where it’s its own subgenre of rap. With a project, you have a platform to put your taste on there: from the production and the arrangements to what you talk about. I think Kanye made ‘your sound’ way more important—the way your music feels, even more than what you’re saying. Like, how do you feel wherever it comes on? Also, he was saying amazing things, but a big part that made it huge was the way it felt. It came on and everybody thought it was good. At the end of every song, you’re like ‘Damn, that was an awesome track.’ That’s what made his [bleep] next-level: Everything was excellent.” —ALEX WILEY



King Louie

GETTY IMAGES FILE

“ He influenced me to add humor to my songs, but still go hard at the same time.” —KINGLOUIE

“ There was a time stretch where my mom got me ‘Speakerboxxx/The Love Below,’ me finding J.Dilla through Adult Swim and my mom getting me ‘College Dropout,’ which truly changed my musical life forever. With ‘College Dropout,’ specifically, I used to stand in the kitchen reciting all the raps, the curse words when my mom wasn’t looking too. I heard the beats and started spazzing with each listen, finding the samples in the booklet and trying to find them on YouTube and whatnot. That album made me such a fan of music, it’s ridiculous.” —THELONIOUS MARTIN

“ ‘The College Dropout’ was an album that made me feel OK being a struggling rapper; it was about a normal dude tryin’ to make it.” —SHOWYOUSUCK

Andrew Barber
TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/Tribune File

Local view

Andrew Barber of fakeshoredrive.com has been documenting Chicago rap at great length for years. He and RedEye’s Ernest Wilkins, who are friends, sat down for a casual conversation about Barber’s thoughts on ‘The College Dropout’ and its impact on the city and hip-hop scene. Here is what Barber said.

I’d already been a huge fan of Kanye’s production since Jay Z’s “The Blueprint,” and “Izzo” remains one of my favorite Jay songs to date. I remember the MTV News brief in ’02, ’03 about Kanye pursuing a solo rap career, and it was on my radar from that day forward. Then the ads for “The College Dropout” started popping up in the album inserts of Roc-A-Fella releases, giving me hope that it’d actually come out. Because remember, there was a time when Kanye never coming out was a possibility—album insert ads have been graveyards for many a rapper, Young Steff, anyone?

In the summer of 2003, “The College Dropout” was beginning to become a reality. I vividly remember seeing the Kanye ad snipes on Milwaukee Avenue—you know, the picture of him with the Louis Vuitton backpack on? Then the “Through the Wire” video dropped. That same summer I bought his two mixtapes, “I’m Good” and “Get Well Soon,” from the mixtape rack at Tony’s Sports on Sheridan. I downloaded every Kanye song I could find on Limewire and Kazaa. The freestyles, the verses tacked on “La, La, La.” Everything. Then I went back to school for my senior year of college. Early versions of “Slow Jamz” and “All Falls Down” surfaced, and that’s when Kanye became my favorite rapper.

Even though I was about to be a college graduate, I related to so much of what Kanye was saying on that album. It was dope to see a rapper who looked like a real person, not your standardized rapper in throwbacks and fitteds. And the music was incredible and thought-provoking. I still listen to “Last Call” to this day for inspiration. I used to play the end of that track over and over and over. His story really influenced me, and motivated me to create my own path and follow my dreams.

From his sound, to his look, to his message, Kanye has changed a lot since then. But Kanye in ’03, ’04 was the greatest, and “The College Dropout” will always be my favorite Kanye album. It came at the perfect time of my life, and was the soundtrack for me transforming from a kid into an adult.

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PAPER DREAMS

Put a local stamp on Valentine's Day cards

By Veronica Wilson | FOR REDEYE

It's easy to be cynical about Valentine's Day. Flowers, chocolates and jewelry add up, and picking up a card from the grocery store isn't very romantic. If you're single, the thought of talking about love can be nauseating.

But when you live in a city full of talented people, Valentine's Day can be an occasion to say "I love you" to anyone while also supporting the local economy, instead of major greeting-card companies.

Thanks to Etsy, accessing gifts from local artists for any occasion has never been easier, including getting your hands on some stylish, unique and inexpensive Valentine's Day cards from Chicago-based shops. And for only \$4 per card, there's no excuse not to.

VERONICA WILSON IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

SPIFFY SALUTATIONS

spiffysalutations.etsy.com

It all began when Elizabeth Salvi found herself with a surplus of creativity.

"Working as a designer I still felt the need to be creative when I got home at night," Salvi said. "So I thought, 'What could I be making that I could still share with my friends and family?'"

And so the first Spiffy Salutations card was born. Salvi now finds inspiration for her cards everywhere, from patterns she sees walking down the street to water droplets sitting on a pane of glass.

MS MATILDA DESIGNS

msmatilda.etsy.com

Marianne Pearson's inspiration for her love-themed cards often comes from her own quirky take on her relationships.

"I like pulling on maybe, like, the little things that you say just between the two of you, like the nicknames and playing

off of that," Pearson said.

While her designs do include the goofy, she tries to incorporate her signature vintage flair, from the cards to the actual name of her shop, Ms Matilda Designs.

"Matilda is my grandmother's name and my middle name," she said, adding that the older name is a perfect representation of the old-school practice of using paper products combined with the whimsy and charm she puts into her designs.

INKPUG

inkpug.etsy.com

There's one obvious question when checking out Lauren Stohler's shop: Why pugs?

"I really love funny, and the pug is so malleable," Stohler said. "The features are expressive and the body is chubby and contorting, and you really can do a lot with a pug that you can do with a human too, so they're very relatable little animals."

With her relatively new shop, Stohler finally is putting her focus on the little cartoons that have always adorned the margins of her notebooks. Though she started InkPug late last year, Stohler and her watercolor pugs already have helped to save real pooches through the sales of prints for charity, a practice she hopes to eventually continue.

THE PAPER PEONY

thepaperpeony.etsy.com

While letterpress printing has been around for centuries, Jennifer Larkin uses the process to illustrate her cards. The ancient art form has its quirks, but Larkin said those are what make her cards unique.

"It's so time-intensive, which can be so amazing but so frustrating because you're dealing with a piece of machinery that was built a long time ago," she said. "There's no perfection to it with the different pressure points, but that's part of the beauty of the letterpress."

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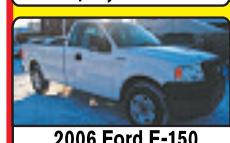
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movies

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FAST PAISED

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Bottle all the wit and attitude of "Mean Girls." Throw that bottle into the ocean. Now try to make a teen comedy about young women with more bark than bite.

That's exactly what "Mean Girls" director Mark Waters has attempted with "Vampire Academy," which derives its humor from timely references like Gandhi, Hot Topic and "Austin Powers." If I laughed once more, I would have laughed once.

In an obnoxious lead performance suggesting that her only comic influence is Kat Dennings, Zoey Deutch ("Ringer") plays 17-year-old Rose, a half-human/half-vampire known as a Dhampir. Her primary task is protecting Lissa (Lucy Fry, also terrible), the likely heir to the Moroi throne who has E.T.-like healing

powers. What's a Moroi? It's a peaceful vampire who needs protection from evil vampires known as Strigoi.

Adapted from Richelle Mead's popular series by Waters' older brother Daniel—who hasn't written a movie you've heard of since 1993's "Demolition Man"—the instantly awful "Vampire Academy" piles on pathetic joke after pathetic joke that land flat because of both the content and the delivery. "Don't you mean Queen Bee-otch?" quips Rose after someone comments on the school's social leader. Poor Sarah Hyland of "Modern Family" plays a nerdy girl, who you can tell is nerdy because she wears glasses.

You easily could make the case that teenagers are often out for blood. But the simultaneously rushed and overlong "Vampire Academy" is like the worst possible version of "Twilight" going to Hogwarts.

**Vampire Academy**

PG-13



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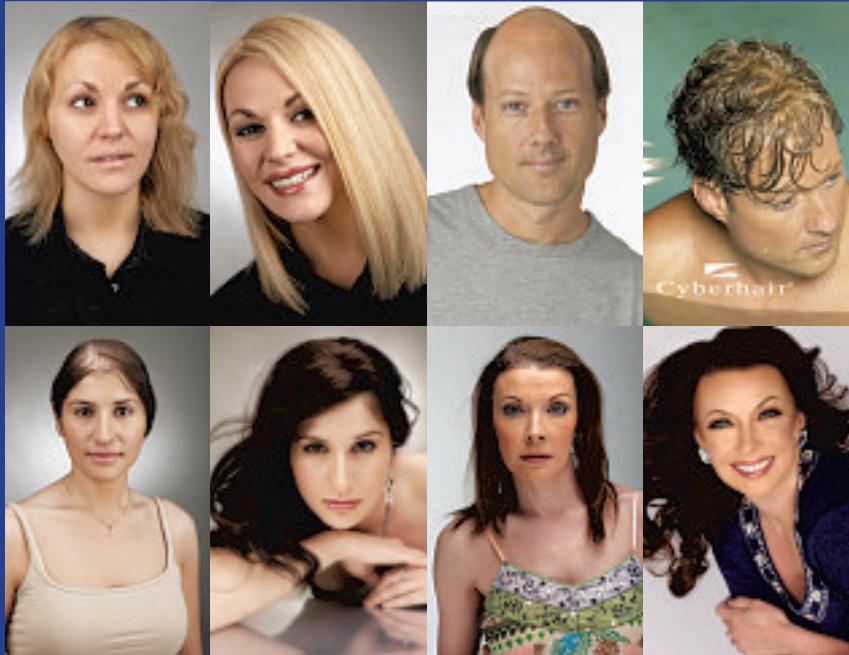
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ROMANCE PLANET

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Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18

Mercury is creating sexual opportunities for you. You could meet someone who is far more experienced, and he or she might offer to show you a few things in the bedroom. Say yes.



Pisces Feb. 19-March 20

A moon opposition could make you a little paranoid. Maybe you're wondering if your honey is really over his ex-girlfriend. Or perhaps you're worried that your lady hasn't moved on from her failed marriage. Talk things out.



Aries March 21-April 19

Mars is giving you a serious case of the relationship blahs. You're not sure if you should stay with your current partner. This isn't the best time to make a major romantic decision. See if you can make things better.



Taurus April 20-May 20

Sometimes you need to lay down the law with your honey. If your guy refuses to get a job, it's OK to complain. If your girlfriend expects you to spend loads of money on her, you're within your rights to stage a protest.



Gemini May 21-June 21

Mercury is giving you added social energy. If you're invited to a party, you'll be the belle of the ball. If you're at a networking event, you'll find it easy to make friends and influence people. People will notice your sharp wit.



Cancer June 22-July 22

You could receive good news on the work front, thanks to the moon. If you've been looking for a new job, you could finally receive a lucrative offer. Share this good news with your honey.



Leo July 23-Aug. 22

If you're feeling down in the dumps, that's to be expected. Two planets are making it harder for you to be your usual self. Take super good care of yourself. If you're in a relationship, ask your honey for massages and kind words.



Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22

You could have a meaningful discussion with your sweetheart, courtesy of Jupiter. Let your partner know some of your deepest hopes and dreams. Find a way to be open and to let yourself be nurtured.



Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23

You could be experiencing complicated feelings about a friend. This person might be emotionally intimate with you, but the two of you have never dated, and you crave companionship with someone who really understands you.



Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 2

Someone around you might be pressuring you to make a decision, but don't give in to pressure. Maybe your honey wants to get married, but you're worried about your compatibility. It's OK to have serious doubts.



Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21

A frenetic moon is making you a little crazy. One minute, you're flirting with strangers and collecting numbers. The next minute, all you want to do is to stay at home. Try to calm down, get grounded and get centered.



Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Don't question what your heart is telling you. If deep down you really don't feel like the person you're dating is a soulmate, be honest.

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WHITE-LOW MILES-LOADED-RAREND
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48798A, \$34,977



2002 FORD RANGER
BLACK-V6-AUTO-LOW MILES
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2010 TOYOTA RAV4
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P17516, \$19,977



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TAN-LOW MILES-NICE
P17834A, \$21,977



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XP17855, \$22,977



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XP17581, \$23,977



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P17756A, \$27,977



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Position	Company	Location	WebId
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ACCOUNTING >>

Staff Accountant	National Design Build Company	Schaumburg, IL	446030
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ADMIN, CLERICAL >>

International Transportation Agent	FISCHER INTERNATIONAL FORWARDERS, INC.	Des Plaines, IL	444514
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Receptionist	Confidential	NW Suburbs, IL	449679
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CUSTOMER SERVICE >>

Travel - Passenger Service Coordinator	Chicago based travel company	Chicago, IL	446106
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EDUCATION >>

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS & PARAPROS WANTED	School District 7 www.wd7.org	Wood Dale, IL	447167
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Superintendent	Valparaiso Community Schools	Valparaiso, IN	437799
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ENGINEERING >>

Licensed Structural Engineer	Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc.	Aurora, IL	448700
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FOOD SERVICE >>

Internal Auditor	Moraine Valley Community College	Palos Hills, IL	446467
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GENERAL >>

RN Case Manager	Apex Healthcare Inc.	Naperville, IL	442323
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY >>

Senior Programmer	University of Chicago Medical Center	Chicago, IL	449151
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LEGAL >>

Associate Attorney	Strauss & Malk LLP	Northbrook, IL	444092
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MAINTENANCE >>

Custodian	SASED	Naperville, IL	442518
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Maintenance Mechanic (Full Time)	Monaco Packaging	Melrose Park, IL	447665
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MANUFACTURING >>

MULTI-SKILLED MAINTENANCE MECHANIC	Major Food Company	Chicago, IL	450152
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Technician Openings	VVF Illinois Services, LLC	Montgomery , IL	439110
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MARKETING >>

Videographer and Producer	Moraine Valley Community College	Palos Hills, IL	447074
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Designer	International company	Chicago, IL	441720
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Product Marketing Manager Sr.	Navistar, Inc.	Lisle, IL	447604
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RESEARCH >>

Statistical Analyst	University of Chicago Medical Center	Chicago, IL	449189
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SALES >>

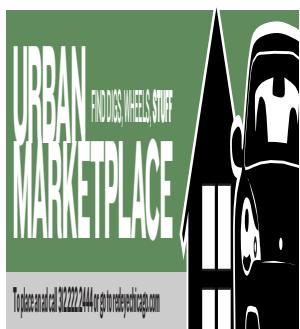
Sales Rep	EMS	Chicagoland, IL	450240
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SKILLS, CRAFTS & TRADES >>

AEROSPACE CNC MACHINIST	Latitude Corp.	Verona , WI	447580
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TRANSPORTATION >>

Driver-Independent Contractor	Quick International Courier, Inc.	Chicago, IL	438781
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Dixon \$1000 M/F
Puppies Red/Apricot/Cream www.kimsk9s.com

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Labrador Retriever 765-585-4908
Williamsport \$400 Males
AKC registered. Black Lab pups, 9 weeks old. 1st shots, dewormed, vet checked.

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Jefferson, WI \$900 Females
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Labrador Retriever 608-575-5114
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Elgin \$450 m/f
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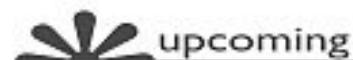
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Literary Events



Ericka Blount Danois

The Chicago Public Library welcomes author Ericka Blount Danois, for a discussion on her book **Love, Peace and Soul**, a behind the scenes look at **Soul Train**, one of America's favorite dance shows. The free event takes place on Monday, February 10 at 6 p.m., in the Video Theatre, Lower Level at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St. In addition to the discussion, clips from the show will be featured and a question and answer session follows the presentation. For more information, visit chicagopubliclibrary.org or call (312) 747-4050.



Patrick McBriarty

The Chicago Public Library welcomes Patrick McBriarty, author of **Chicago River Bridges**. The free event takes place on Tuesday, February 18 at 6 p.m., in the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium, Lower Level at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St. McBriarty provides a multimedia presentation on Chicago's bridges and recounts his journey into this amazing topic of innovation, design and major contributions by Chicagoans to movable bridge technology. For more information, visit chicagopubliclibrary.org or call (312) 747-4050.

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WEST RIDGE (7000) **\$1175 HEATED** **C833677**
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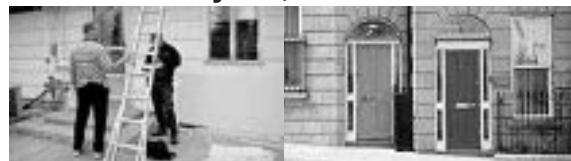
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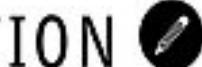
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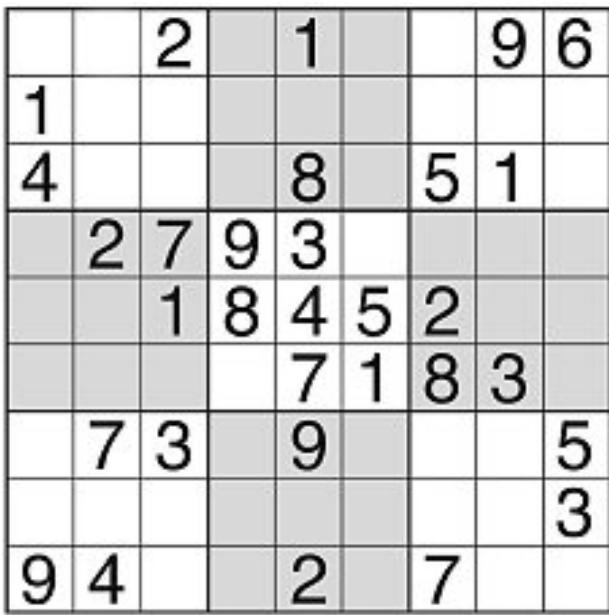
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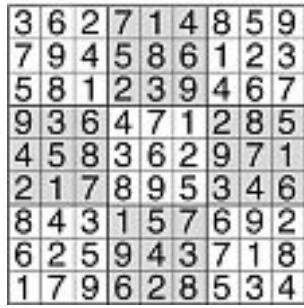
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ACROSS

1 Lively Irish dance
4 Largest city in Nebraska
9 Up in ... irate
13 Border on
15 Remedies
16 Hawaiian feast
17 Liver secretion
18 Ridge on a shoe's bottom
19 Give a traffic ticket to
20 Buy hoping the price will go up
22 Dollar bills
23 Shirts & halters
24 Deteriorate
26 Unattractive
29 Moving slightly
34 Take ...; disassemble
35 Midsection
36 Mongrel
37 Uncle ... Rice
38 Fill cracks with putty
39 Popular detergent
40 Rage
41 ... care for; disliked
42 Cuban line dance
43 Australian island
45 Aim at
46 Traveler's stop
47 Pillow cover
48 Group of cattle
51 No. 1 foe
56 Gung-ho
57 Native New Zealander
58 Ark builder
60 No longer sick
61 Command
62 Saga
63 Leg joint
64 Requirements
65 Modern

DOWN

1 Poke
2 Wading bird
3 Swallow hard
4 Dwell in
5 ... over; contemplates
6 Region
7 Warmth
8 Star on a PC keyboard
9 "Little Women" author
10 Spoil
11 Spouse
12 Hauls into court
13 Wobbles
21 Young horse
25 Many a time
26 Traditional nun's wear
27 "La Traviata" or "Carmen"
28 Neck coverings on horses
29 Steam bath
30 To the ... fully
31 Cake coating
32 Elbow
33 "Terrific!"
35 Streambed
38 Spice in apple pie recipes
39 Cause pain to
41 Vice President Quayle
42 James or Scott
44 Center
45 Not ours and not yours
47 Tear to pieces
48 Bird of prey
49 Level; balanced
50 Irritate
52 Unusual
53 ZIP ...; part of an address
54 ... and groan; complain
55 Ivy League school
59 Chop down

TODAY IN THE YEAR ...

1949: Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman" opened at Broadway's Morosco Theater.
1968: Peggy Fleming of the United States won the gold medal in women's figure skating at the Winter Olympic Games in Grenoble, France.
1996: World chess champion Garry Kasparov lost the first game of a match in Philadelphia against an IBM computer dubbed "Deep Blue."

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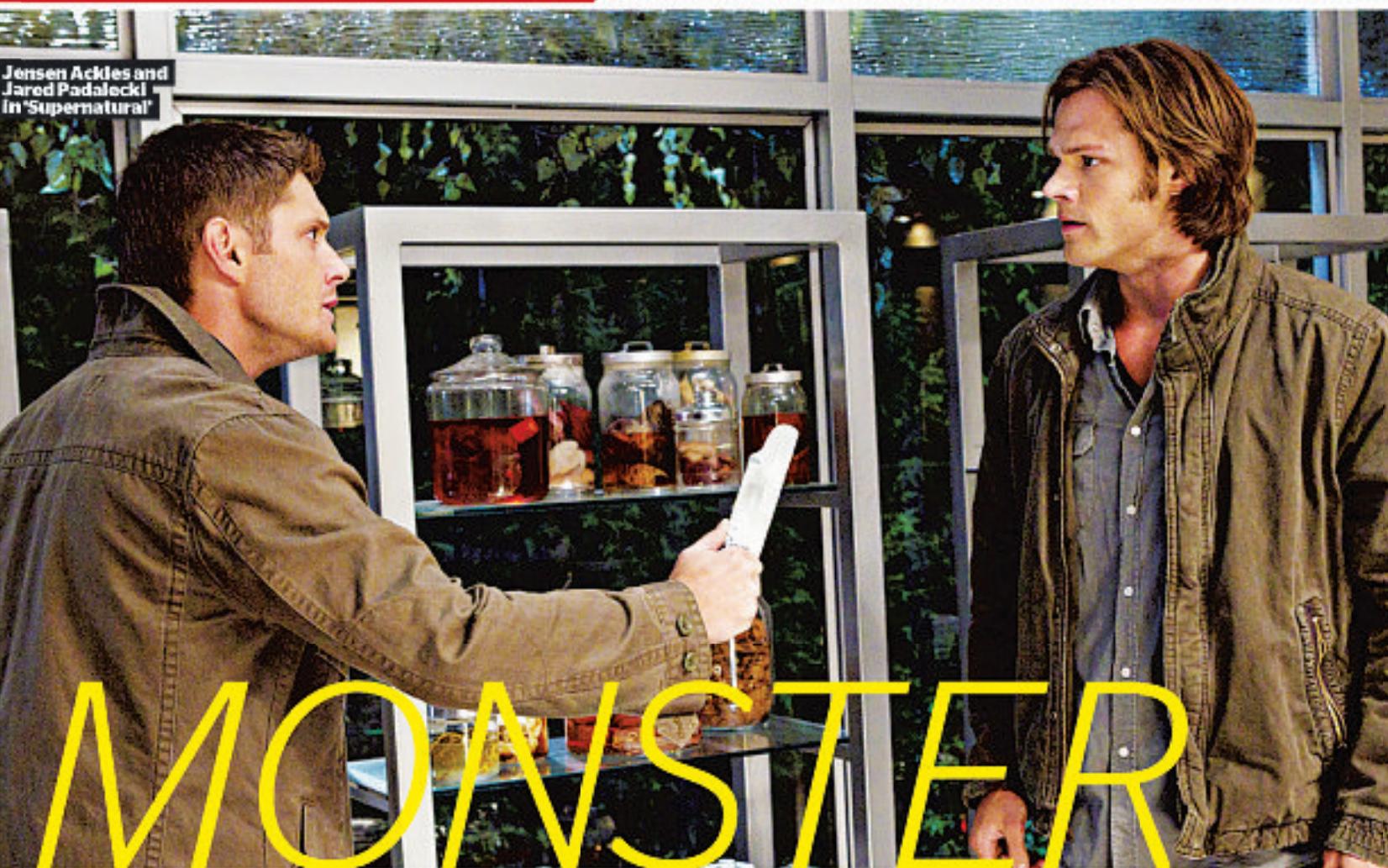


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whoville

CONVENTION ALERT

The touring "Supernatural" convention will take place Oct. 24-26 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont. The show is known for having one of the most passionate fan bases in TV. "Supernatural" stars Jensen Ackles and Jared Padalecki are scheduled to attend.



MONSTER WATCH



ABOUT LAST NIGHT

Luis Gomez

lgomez@tribune.com
@TribLuis

Chicago in late March.

The pilot will air in the 20th episode of "Supernatural's" current, ninth season. You might

recall "Chicago PD" also was introduced as a back-door pilot on "Chicago Fire" toward the end of last season. TV Line reported "Tribes" protagonist Ennis Roth will meet "Supernatural" protagonists Sam and Dean Winchester in the episode, and learn about the five monster families that run Chicago, including werewolves and shape-shifters. And like the Winchester brothers, Roth, a vengeful son of a cop, will dedicate himself to hunting monsters from then on.

It's unclear if "Tribes" would continue to shoot in both Vancouver and Chicago, should The CW decide to pick the series up. Chicago already is home to a handful of scripted TV shows, including NBC's "Chicago Fire," "Chicago PD" and "Crisis," ABC's "Mind

Chicago may be the setting for 'Supernatural' spinoff on CW

Games" and USA's "Sirens." The city is a part-time home for Showtime's "Shameless," which shoots its exterior scenes here twice a year, including Tuesday through Sunday.

FX's in-the-works sitcom "Braddock & Jackson"—starring Kelsey Grammer and Martin Lawrence as lawyers from different backgrounds who team up—also will be set in Chicago, but the multicamera show will film on a sound stage in the L.A. area, a spokeswoman for FX said. Sitcoms, it should be noted, rarely venture out of L.A. or New York.

WANT MORE?

For more of Chicago's celeb news, go to chicagotribune.com/luis.



ALSO SPOTTED ...

■ **Mike Tyson** appeared Thursday at Municipal Bar + Dining Co. to promote ESPN's "Friday Night Fights" card taking place the next day at the UIC Pavilion. "The Capones" stars Dominic Capone and Staci Richter attended Tyson's one-man show, "Undisputed Truth," with their co-stars Saturday at The Venue at Horseshoe Casino.

■ **Sophia Bush** ("Chicago PD") volunteered Saturday at dog day care and boarding school Unleashed in Goose Island, on behalf of Trio Animal Foundation and Barefoot Wine's Soles of the Year program.

■ **Peter Claymore** ("Boardwalk Empire") dined Friday at Tortoise Club.

■ R&B singer **Jeremih** appeared Saturday at The Underground.

■ UFC fighter **Clay Guida** dined Friday at Japonais by Morimoto.

THIS WEEK

Jeff Tweedy will perform his annual benefit concerts for Near North Montessori School's financial aid program Friday and Saturday at The Vic.





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Heather Zerr | *Meat*
Scott LoBianco | *The Berkshire Room*
Laura Sandborn | *Jellyfish*

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#BestBartenderChi

red hot

Surprise zombies!

Were you one of the lucky Xbox Video users who got a sneak peek of "The Walking Dead" midseason premiere Sunday morning? That, uh, wasn't on purpose, though we're sure it didn't stop you. According to deadline.com, Sunday night's episode was available for free on the service hours before it was set to air. AMC has declined to comment, and the episode was pulled. Don't worry, studio execs. It's not like gamers are big fans of sci-fi or anything.



'The Walking Dead'
MCT FILE

Siiiiiiiiigh



GETTY IMAGES

Oh look, **Shia LaBeouf** did something weird again. According to The New York Daily News, the "Transformers" star walked the Berlin Film Festival red carpet with a [paper bag over his head](#) that read "I am not famous anymore." Then, during a news conference, he answered a question with only a cryptic ... you know what? We're just going to stop giving him attention right here, right now. Move along, people.



'Lego' land

Nostalgia + Chris Pratt + Batman = big box office bucks. Who knew? "The Lego Movie" totally disassembled its competition this weekend, pulling in \$69 million on top of excellent reviews. No word on whether this will translate to a bump in Lego sales after America was reminded that we totally could build, like, a Batmobile, or a really cool laser gun.

QUOTABLE

“Jay, you've made a whole lot of jokes about me over the years. But do not worry, I'm not upset. On a totally unrelated note, I've decided to make you my new ambassador to Antarctica. Hope you've got a warm coat, funny man.”

—President Obama's taped message to Jay Leno on Thursday, Leno's last night hosting NBC's "Tonight Show."

The last honest cop in 'Gotham'

Ben McKenzie is trading crime-fighting duties in L.A. to clean up Gotham City. The former "Southland" star has been cast in the lead role of Det. James Gordon in Fox's upcoming drama "Gotham," Warner Bros. announced Saturday. "Gotham" explores Gordon's early career before he became Gotham City's police commissioner and Batman's key ally.



Space case

"Performing in space is such an honor." Who else but Lady Gaga could utter such a phrase and still be taken seriously? "I want to challenge myself to come up with something that will not only bring everyone together but will also have a message of love that blasts into the beyond," she says in the March issue of Harper's Bazaar, referring to her planned one-song performance on a Virgin Galactic flight, which was announced in November.

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